

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Josh Engel

Date of review: 8 December 2016

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-E(photo)

Comments: I'm pretty well convinced that Herring x Kelp Gull is the best conclusion for the identity of this bird and that it's the same bird that has been seen over the previous years on the Lake Michigan shore of southwest Michigan and northeast Indiana. The combination of mantle color, leg color, head streaking, primary pattern, plus shape and size of the bird all seem to point to this hybrid combination. Given the extensive photographic documentation of this individual, and the inherent uncertainty in hybrid gull identification, I'm quite happy to be accepting this record with the knowledge that it may be revisited in the future.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Fraker

Date of review: 12/5/16

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-E(ph)

Comments:

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Greg Lambeth

Date of review: January 18, 2017

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A – E (photograph)

Comments:

This is one of the most extensively documented records I have reviewed and I will defer to the expertise of the authors of the 2011 paper. IORC is fortunate to have such thoroughly documented and researched records regarding these gulls.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: McMullen

Date of review: 1-5-17

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-E- (photo)

Comments:

Amar knows more about gulls than most birders in the state put together so if he says it's so, I concur! It appears to me he's done his homework, discussing this with neighboring states' birders who saw this bird in their areas and described the sequence of events very well.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Douglas Stotz

Date of review: 16 January 2017

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: See comments

Comments:

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Paul Sweet

Date of review: 12/5/16

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-E(photo)

Comments: The Brock & Cassady paper seems pretty definitive, and the wingtip pattern and gray legs don't really fit anything else.

IORC EVALUATION FORM

Record #: 2016-049

Name of bird form: Herring Gull x Kelp Gull

Committee member name: Geoffrey A. Williamson

Date of review: 4 December 2016

Circulation number: 1st

Vote: A-E(photo)

Comments:

Let me first note that I requested additional details from the observer (see Documentation #2), and in my request I specifically asked what in his view connects this bird to the individual from Indiana that is referenced in the documentation and that has been visiting Indiana each winter since 2010. However, I do not feel the the additional materials directly addressed this question.

I also reviewed photos of purported Herring x Kelp Gulls available at the Macauley Library via eBird checklists. At the time of my review (4 December 2016), there were 44 photographs, 23 of which were taken in northwest Indiana, another nine of the Wilmington bird documented in this record 2016-049, and 12 from Louisiana. One of the eBird checklists involving the bird from record 2016-049 (<https://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27600460>). This checklist includes four photographs of a bird that do seem to establish it as the same individual (the 2016-049 individual) based on plumage features and leg color, and that do also show the outstretched wing. The photo of the outstretched wing shows a single mirror on p10, which is what the literature says to expect on Herring Gull x Kelp Gull. Looking through the photographs of the Indiana sightings, mostly from Michigan City, it is harder to be certain that they involve the same individual, but I did not see anything that would convince of the opposite, either.

The appearance of this individual seems pretty consistent with what is expected in Herring Gull x Kelp Gull hybrids, except possibly that there seems to be little in the way of yellow tones to the legs apparent in the photographs (though the written details in the submitted documentation mention their color as "dull, grayish yellow"). To conclude identification as Herring Gull x Kelp Gull, one also must be able to eliminate other forms of large, dark mantled gulls:

1. Great Black-backed Gull
2. Lesser Black-backed Gull
3. Kelp Gull
4. Yellow-footed Gull
5. Western Gull
6. Slaty-backed Gull

And hybrids such as

7. Herring Gull x Great Black-backed Gull.

It would seem that none of these other forms are really a good fit for this individual. The closest are Yellow-footed Gull and Herring Gull x Great Black-backed Gull.

Yellow-footed Gull is a species that I am not very familiar with, but it seems to me that the legs/feet should show more yellow, and the pink tones of the feet of this bird would be wrong for Yellow-footed Gull.

Regarding Herring x Great Black-backed Gull, the leg color seems problematic, as noted in the submitted documentation. The documentation also points out that the one small mirror on p10 (seen in the eBird checklist that I reference above) is less white in the wing tip than one might expect for Herring x Great Black-backed Gull.